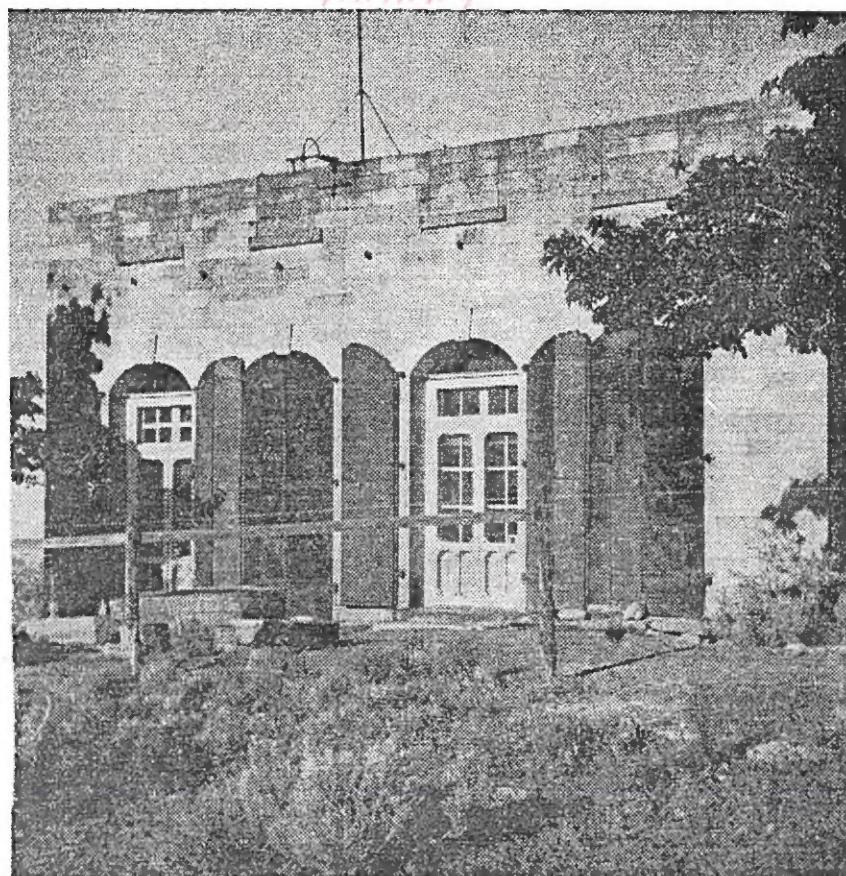


Silver Reef Mine
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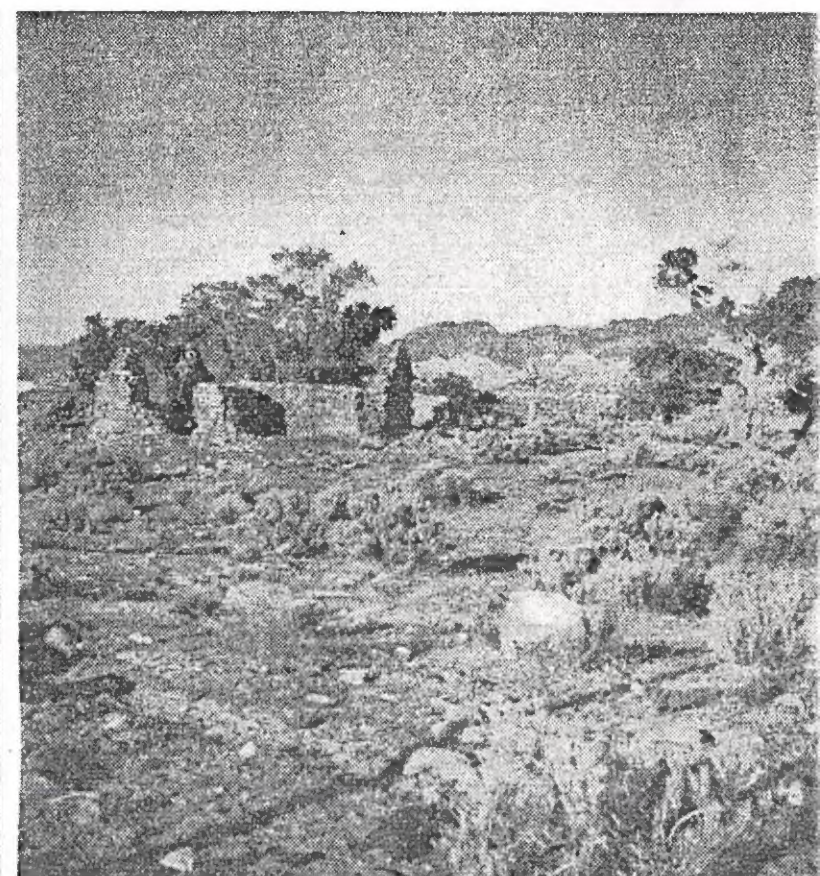
Mining



Of the building which formerly housed the Silver Reef's leading drug store, only a single wall stands. The town boasted of 5000 inhabitants.



Its shutters hang in the desert wind and its cages see only pack rats now. This sturdy institution is the former Wells-Fargo bank building at the Reef.



Sagebrush, old stone ruins and a few aged honey locust trees are all that mark the site of this fantastic Utah mining town. The city died in 1900.

Silver Reef—Utah's Most Famous Impossibility

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"Once you have declared an occurrence impossible," they say, "fate goes on double-time to prove you a liar!"

Nowhere was this truth proven more definitely than down in the southwestern corner of Utah, in the latter half of the 19th century. From the earliest dawn of scientific mining, experts had agreed that silver did not—and geologically could not—occur in sandstone.

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*Sun. 31 July 1949
SL Tribune*

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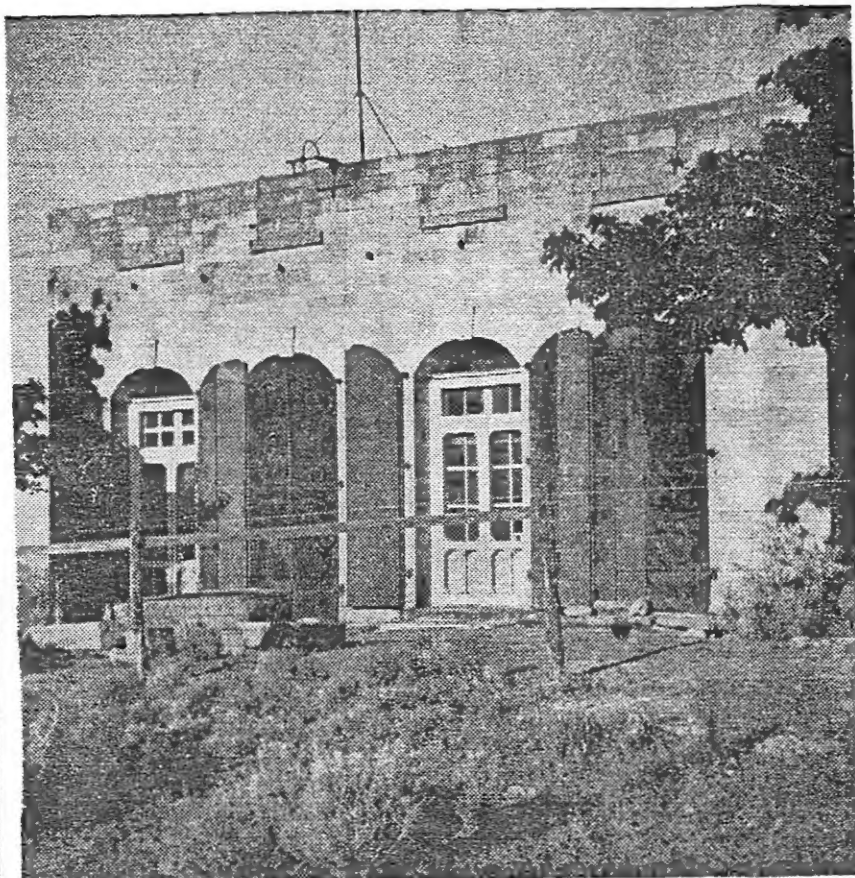
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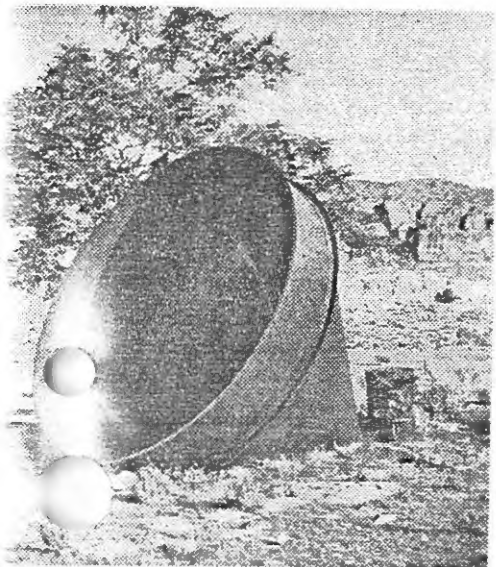
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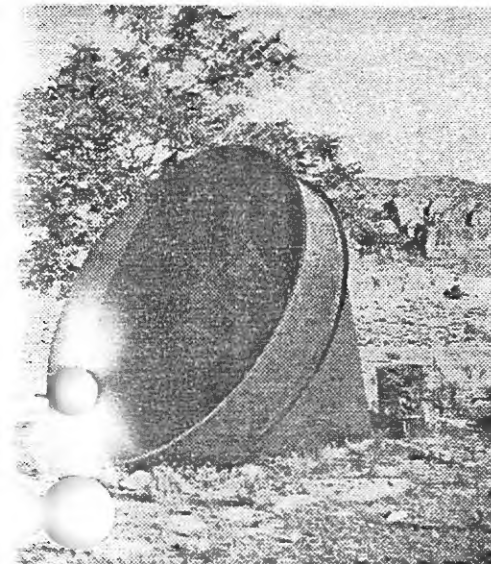
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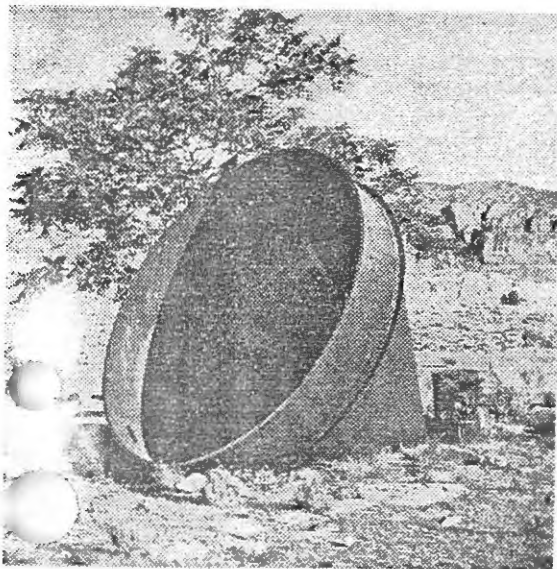
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The Shortest 'Wettest' River in Idaho

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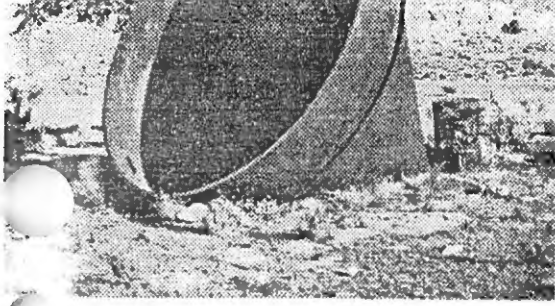
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Another reason for the river's obscurity might be the famous Thousand Springs at



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No, they didn't wish . . . but, wait! That broken stone—here was a chance to get unassailable proof of Murphy's false assays! Everyone knew that sandstone never carried values.

BUYING the shattered wheel—so the story goes—they mortared it into still smaller fragments to effectually mask its identity and submitted a bagful of the material to Murphy for assay.

When Murphy's report showed the Utah "sample" to carry \$200 in silver to the ton, the infuriated miners were for stringing him up to the nearest crossbeam. One of them, fortunately, had a bump of curiosity sufficiently large that he investigated the grindstone's point of origin.

There he discovered an entire reef of sandstone, rich in horn silver!

With the world's leading geologists still resolutely maintaining that silver's occurrence in sandstone was a mineralogical impossibility, news of the discovery met largely with derision and gained serious attention from neither capital nor miners.

Not until a sample of the ore was sent to Walker Brothers, Salt Lake bankers, was the deposit accorded any outside interest. Silver's occurrence in sandstone might be just as impossible as claimed; but, nevertheless, this silver!

The astute Walkers, who were not noted overlooking opportunities, immediately telegraphed to the scene three of their ablest

Sunday, July 31, 1949

AMONG the saints were a few isolationists who resented this wholesale "invasion" by non-Mormons, but for the most part the colonists took a wider view. Apostle Erastus Snow, leader of the Virgin valley settlements, even went on record as thanking God that he had sent "Brother" Barbee and his mining camp to provide outlet for Mormon farm produce, thereby ameliorating the struggle these colonists had long endured due to inadequate transportation facilities and limited markets.

If there was ever any friction between the Virgin valley saints and the "Silver Reef sinners," there seems to be no record of it. On the contrary, some of the most outstanding examples of cooperation in Utah's early history took place here.

For example, there was the matter of the Catholic church . . .

Father Lawrence Scanlan, later bishop of the Salt Lake diocese, had ridden into the unholy mining camp on a mule in 1877. He was an earnest young priest, and in the weeks immediately following his arrival he solicited from the miners, merchants, gamblers and "good time women" funds sufficient to enable the building of a church, school and hospital. Until work of construction might be completed, however, there was in Silver Reef no vacant building in which the church might function.

RECOGNIZING his high principles and capacity for good works, church leaders at St. George gave the young padre free use of their tabernacle for Catholic services, and in order that his fledgling church should not be handicapped through lack of proper music, choristers at St. George even learned to sing Catholic masses in Latin!

A little later, when Uncle Sam began concerning himself with the marital affairs of his Utah nephews, Silver Reef found herself in position to repay St. George's courtesy.

Because the Reef was then southern Utah's largest city—as well as its only genteel settlement of any importance—federal officers who were periodically dispatched on "polyg hunts" adopted it as their headquarters and from there conducted raiding forays on settlements of the Virgin valley.

Due to a cooperative alliance between telegraph operators of the Reef and St. George,

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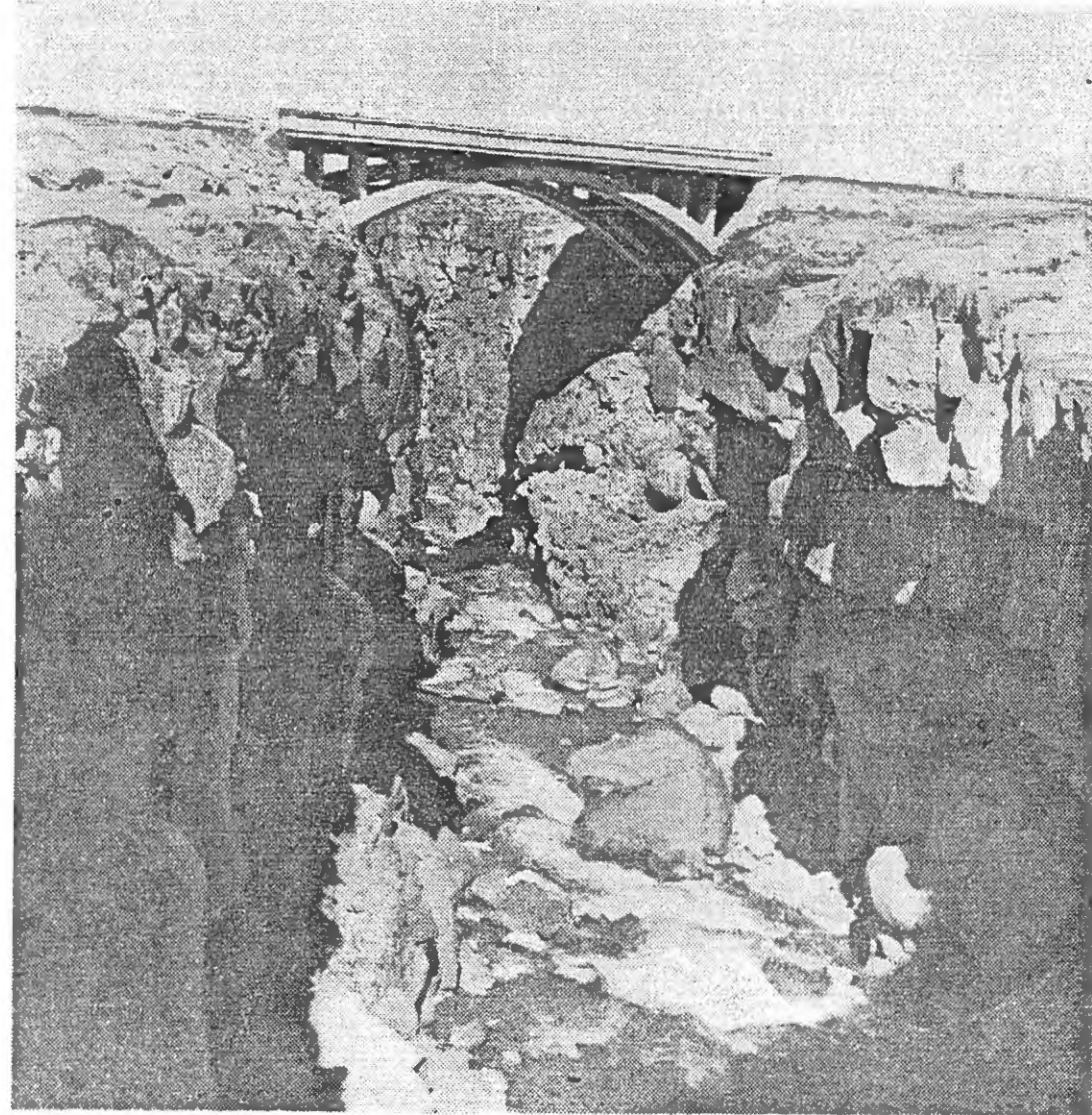
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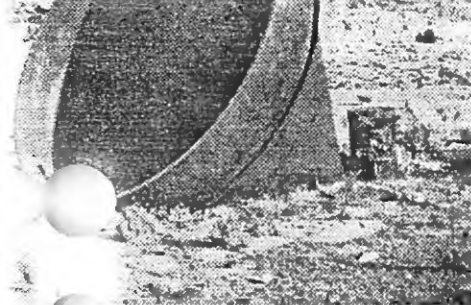
THE MALAD also stands alone for being one of Idaho's "wettest" rivers, at least in the southern part of the state. According to the Idaho Digest, the Malad "is the only stream in the whole of southern Idaho from Henrys Fork within 12 miles of the west boundary of Yellowstone park, to the Idaho-Oregon line, a distance measured along Snake river of fully 450 miles, which, rising in the mountains in the north, reaches Snake river in the summertime."

Its waters, headed by a huge spring, apparently pop up out of the desert in the same way that the Thousand Springs are fed. Theory has it that the springs are fed by the Big and Little Lost Rivers of the Mackay area, but no one is sure.

In any case, the Malad river merits a stop and a cautious look. Most people crawl to the cliff edge on their hands and knees to view this, one of Idaho's most accessible—and most neglected—scenic attractions.



This isn't one of Idaho's famous "lost" rivers. It's just neglected. Due to a lack of markers, most motorists pass this scenic attraction without ever noticing its spectacular gorge or water.



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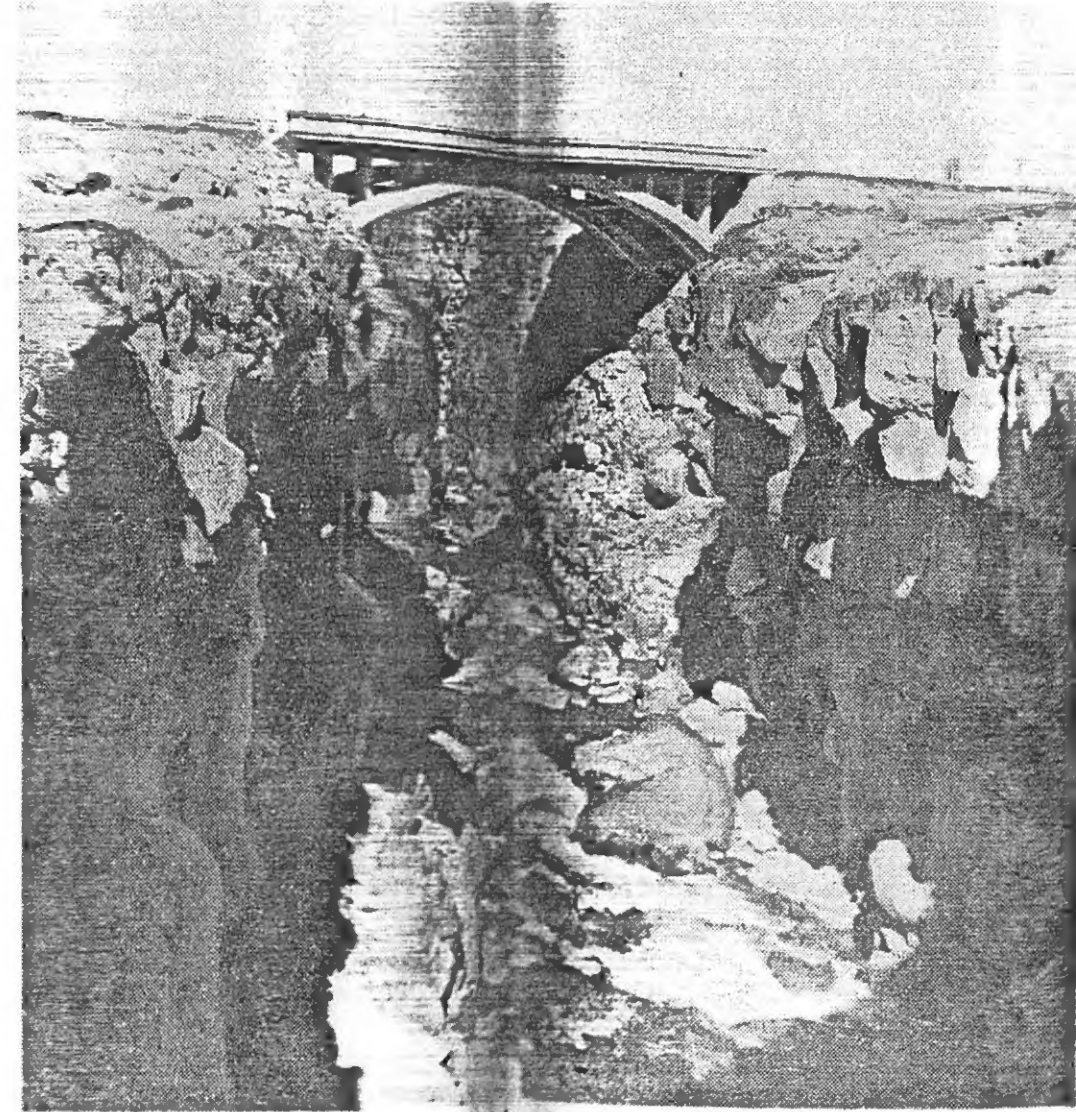
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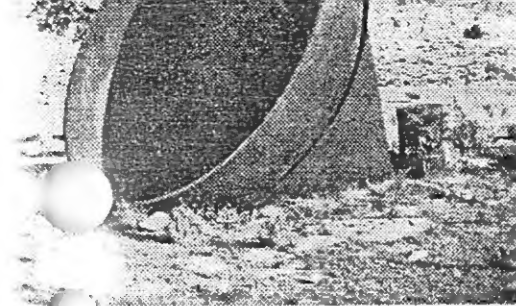
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Its waters, headed by a
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In any case, the Malad river
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This isn't one of Idaho's famous "lost rivers." It's just neglected. Due to a lack of publicity, most motorists pass this scenic attraction without ever noticing its spectacular gorge or walls.



Rotary funnel is a separating cone for Silver Reef ore.

mining gentlemen wish to purchase the stone? No, they didn't wish . . . but, wait! That stone—here was a chance to get unobtainable proof of Murphy's false assays! Everyone knew that sandstone never carried silver.

BUYING the shattered wheel—so the story goes—they mortared it into still smaller fragments to effectually mask its identity and substituted a bagful of the material to Murphy's assay.

When Murphy's report showed the Utah sample to carry \$200 in silver to the ton, infuriated miners were for stringing him to the nearest crossbeam. One of them, fortunately, had a bump of curiosity sufficiently large that he investigated the grindstone's point of origin.

There he discovered an entire reef of sandstone, rich in horn silver!

With the world's leading geologists still absolutely maintaining that silver's occurrence in sandstone was a mineralogical impossibility, news of the discovery met largely with suspicion and gained serious attention from neither capital nor miners.

Not until a sample of the ore was sent to Walker Brothers, Salt Lake bankers, was the possibility recorded any outside interest. Silver's occurrence in sandstone might be just as impossible as claimed; but, nevertheless, this was the case.

His estate Walkers, who were not noted for looking opportunities, immediately came to the scene three of their ablest men.

AMONG the saints were a few isolationists who resented this wholesale "invasion" by non-Mormons, but for the most part the colonists took a wider view. Apostle Erastus Snow, leader of the Virgin valley settlements, even went on record as thanking God that he had sent "Brother" Barbee and his mining camp to provide outlet for Mormon farm produce, thereby ameliorating the struggle these colonists had long endured due to inadequate transportation facilities and limited markets.

If there was ever any friction between the Virgin valley saints and the "Silver Reef sinners," there seems to be no record of it. On the contrary, some of the most outstanding examples of cooperation in Utah's early history took place here.

For example, there was the matter of the Catholic church . . .

Father Lawrence Scanlan, later bishop of the Salt Lake diocese, had ridden into the unholy mining camp on a mule in 1877. He was an earnest young priest, and in the weeks immediately following his arrival he solicited from the miners, merchants, gamblers and "good time women" funds sufficient to enable the building of a church, school and hospital. Until work of construction might be completed, however, there was in Silver Reef no vacant building in which the church might function.

RECOGNIZING his high principles and capacity for good works, church leaders at St. George gave the young padre free use of their tabernacle for Catholic services, and in order that his fledgling church should not be handicapped through lack of proper music, choristers at St. George even learned to sing Catholic masses in Latin!

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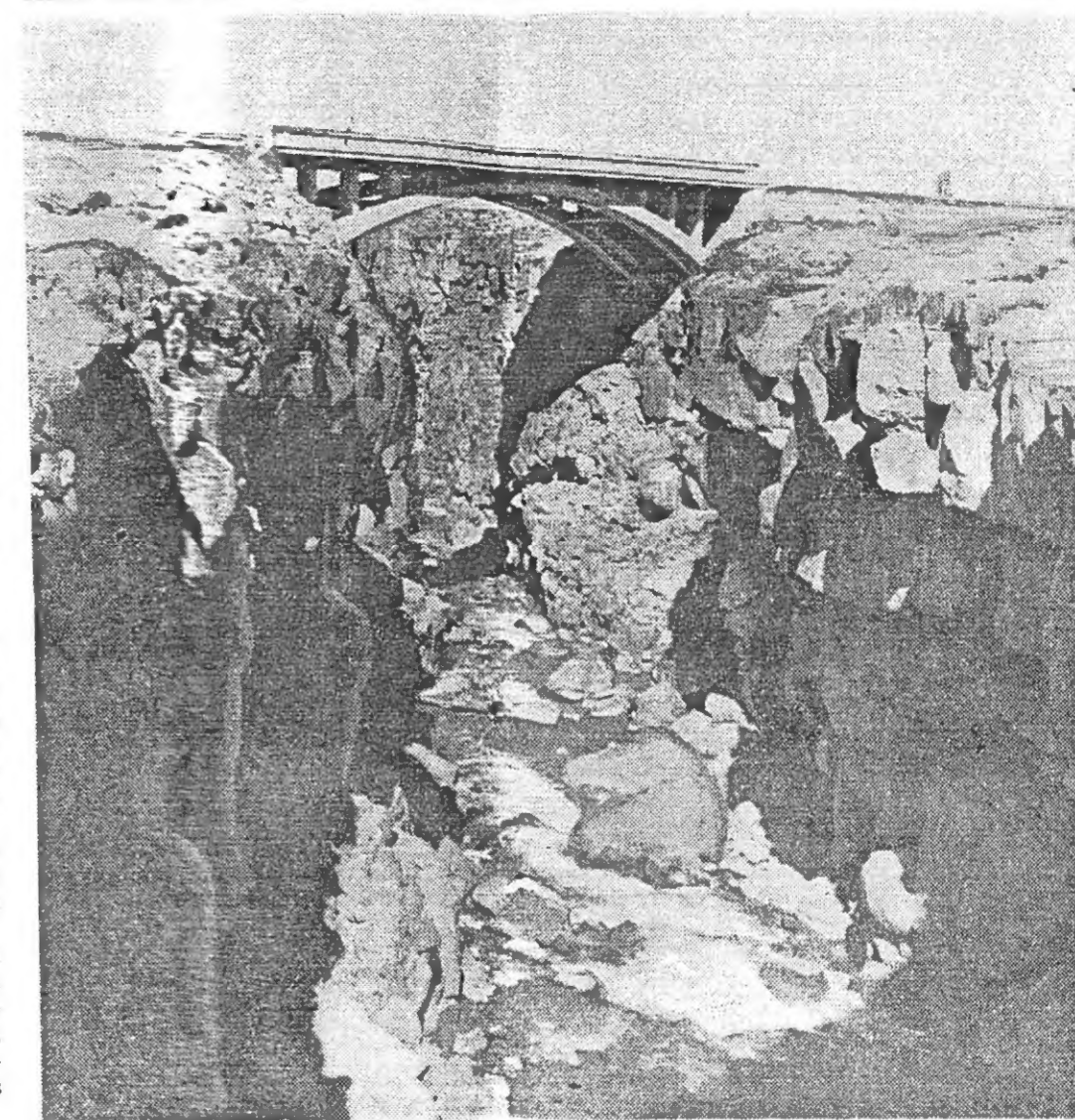
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